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At hearing, drivers vent outrage over photo sales

But House panel votes to continue

By Tim Smith
CAPITAL BUREAU

COLUMBIA — Dozens of drivers appeared at a legislative hearing Thursday to express their anger over the sale of state driver's license photographs to a New Hampshire firm — even as the House budget-writing committee, in another part of the same building, voted to continue such sales.

"That makes me furious," said Elizabeth Moultrie of Columbia, who earlier in the day had lectured a legislative panel over the sale. "They basically don't care."

The House Ways and Means Committee, amid a flurry of provisions, renewed the state's sales of driver's license photos in an action viewed by some lawmakers as routine and by others as yet another vote on the controversy.

"I think until we can get to the bottom of this and study it a bit more, we should not carte-blanche approve something that is already in the midst of a big brohaha," said House Minority Leader Gilda Cobb-Hunter, D-Orangeburg, who voted against the provision.

The Ways and Means vote will not, however, affect other bills to ban such sales, which are expected to surface next week before the House Judiciary Committee.

More than 100 people crowded into a hearing room Thursday to express their feelings to a House judicial subcommittee about the sales.

Lawmakers have been studying the state's sales of driver's license photos since last month, after *The Greenville News* reported that the state had sold 3.5 million driver's license photos to Image Data LLC of Nashua, N.H., for the company to use in an identity fraud prevention service it markets to retailers.

Several bills have been filed to ban such sales or make it easier for drivers to block the transfer of their photos and records for commercial use.

Thursday's hearing, the second by the judicial subcommittee, drew dozens of angry drivers, as well as state Attorney General Charles Condon, the president of Image Data, a retired federal Secret Service agent, an Aiken prosecutor and various lawmakers.

Many of the drivers who signed up to speak left after waiting more than three hours through the testimony

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